

All India Cultural Conference

RED FORT, DELHI.

MARCH 15 TO 18, 1951

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Organised by :

INDIAN CULTURAL ACADEMY
NEW DELHI.

Dear Friends,

With the achievement of our independence we face a new task – a vital and very important one, and this task requires a new approach. We have to build up a democracy which would provide equal opportunities to all, irrespective of caste, creed or sex. To lay a solid foundation for this, our people must attain a certain common cultural level. Otherwise, our dreams of Ram Raj or a secular democratic State will remain unrealised and cause further frustration in our national life.

We have a rich cultural heritage of which the spiritual equality of man is the corner stone. This spiritual equality must be accepted and expressed now in the material, economic, social and political life of the people. From time to time, saints and seers of this country have preached and practised what is best and noblest for the human being. The virile and vigorous people of India have built up according to their genius distinct specialities in their religious, political and social life. Due to many causes beyond our control decay has set in, and great damage has been done to this heritage. We are today clinging to the shadow without any real appreciation of the substance. This glorious heritage of culture that has been handed down from time immemorial is today being expressed only by a few of our best individuals. But the culture of a country is not to be measured by the greatness of a few indivi-

duals. Unless the whole community has easy access to the fountain springs of that culture, and the common man is enabled to live in the light of that culture, social, economic or political progress is apt to be hampered.

For this we need a large-scale movement of cultural co-ordination with a band of determined and conscious workers who, through a dynamic movement will socialize the attainments of the cultured individual and build up a composite and common culture in the face of social, economic and political diversities.

Linguistic differences and political disunity have never obstructed India from building up a composite and common culture. We have to apply ourselves to the task of bringing about a synthesis of whatever is best in the social life of the various regions of India by developing closer contacts and working towards the reconstruction and enrichment of the composite culture which we have inherited. Now that we are independent, we have to develop as a distinct, forceful and progressive entity. India has 13 principal languages and several dialects, in the literature of each of which great treasures of our culture are preserved. These have now to be made available to the common man. Our provincial languages have been enriching themselves progressively during this half century drawing freely from the fountain source of our ancient literature and the literatures of the West. We have to create a free and progressive atmosphere for the development of all these languages.

With these ideas in view, we approached Dr. Rajendra Prasad for guidance, and with his approval, I convened a meeting of the members of the Constituent Assembly on Friday, the 14th October, 1949 in the Council of State Hall. There was a good response. Many members attended this meeting and Dr. Rajendra Prasad was proposed to the Chair.

Shri K. M. Munshi then moved a resolution proposing :

“To convene a conference of men of letters, artists and persons who are likely to take interest in the promotion of the objects of the Academy”.

At that meeting, it was also resolved “to appoint a committee to prepare the final draft constitution and place the same before the above conference, and to bring this institution into existence”.

A Provisional Committee was formed with Dr. Rajendra Prasad as Chairman, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya as Working Chairman, and Shri Satyanarayana and myself as Secretaries and Shri Kamalnayan Bajaj as treasurer.

At a meeting of the Provisional Committee held on 17th October, 1949, a Sub-Committee consisting of the Chairman, the Secretaries, Hon'ble Shri R. R. Diwakar, Hon'ble Shri K. Santhanam and Lala Deshbandhu Gupta was appointed to draft a Constitution. This draft Constitution is placed before the delegates. The draft Constitution proposes the following objects for the Indian Cultural Academy :—

- (1) To bring about a synthesis of whatever is best in the

social life of various regions of India through contacts and exchanges of literature with a view to work towards the development and promotion of a composite Indian culture.

- (2) To organise social functions and festivals for the purpose of enabling the people of various regions in India to have closer contacts in the spheres of their religious, cultural and social life.
- (3) To bring about a synthetic unity among the literary and cultural activities of different provinces and spread the same throughout India.
- (4) To arrange for the translation of best books from the provincial languages into each other and into foreign languages, and also for the publication and distribution of the same.
- (5) To convene conferences of writers and artists of India from time to time.
- (6) To organize and maintain a Central Indian Cultural Centre in which the best specimens of literature and fine arts of different provinces may be exhibited.
- (7) To affiliate institutions having similar objects and to co-ordinate their activities.

I may mention here that the Government of India also have a proposal to establish a Cultural Trust working through Academies like an Academy of Letters, Fine Arts, etc. But the objects of our Academy, in my opinion, are more compre-

hensive, and envisage a wider movement of the masses.

It was originally intended to hold this conference last year but several factors, good and bad, were instrumental in postponing it for some time. A circular letter giving briefly the objects of the proposed All India Cultural Conference was sent by me in May 1950 to all the members of Parliament, Vice Chancellors of all important Indian Universities, major cultural and educational institutions and distinguished persons in the fields of Arts and Literature. About seven hundred letters were sent, but I must confess that the response was not very encouraging. I did not however lose faith. With the help of some Delhi friends I was able to convene small group meetings to enlist the support of the citizens of Delhi for this cause and I am glad to be able to say that the response was very favourable. In September last year a provisional Reception Committee was formed with Hon'ble Shri Shri Prakasa as Chairman, Shri Radha Raman as Vice-Chairman and Shri Yogeshwar Dayal as Secretary. The Reception Committee decided to hold along with the Conference an Arts Festival, an Exhibition and Fourteen Language Courts. It was proposed to hold this Conference in December last, but it became known that the Government of India also intended to hold a similar conference sometime thereabout. So efforts were made to enlist the support of the Government and see that duplication in this work was avoided. As has been stated earlier, the Government of India have a proposal to establish an autonomous body called the Indian Cultural Trust. The main activities of this Trust will be carried on through 3 Academies to be called the Academy of Letters, the Academy of Arts and

Architecture and the Academy of Music, Drama and Dance. The object of these Academies will be to foster and develop the subjects with which they deal and to promote the study of those subjects with a view to maintaining the highest possible standard of achievement. Since our Academy had similar objectives in view, Shri Satyanarayana and myself along with some others met Dr. Tarachand, Secretary of the Ministry of Education to explore the possibility of holding the two conferences simultaneously. Dr. Tarachand agreed to the proposal and promised to extend all possible help to make our conference a success.

You will therefore see that a Conference convened by the Ministry of Education is meeting on the 15th and 17th in Delhi itself and that the delegates to that Conference are also the delegates to this conference. I am sure you will agree with me that the selection of delegates for such a conference was bound to be a difficult job, but we have taken pains to make this Conference as representative as we could. Invitations have been sent to over 100 persons who have distinguished themselves by their work in such fields of study as History and Archaeology, Psychology, Religions, Social Sciences, English, Philosophy, Anthropology, Philology, Oriental Learning in Sanskrit Language and Literature, Journalism, Arts, Dance and Sculpture. Invitations were also sent to about 16 Cultural institutions and prominent scholars and writers in Hindi and the various principal languages. The conference of these delegates will have 5 sittings in all, two to-day one tomorrow and two the day-after. It is proposed that in this sitting the Conference

should elect a Committee to examine the draft Constitution that has been placed before it. This Committee will report to the plenary session on the 18th instant.

The Arts Festival of the Conference will include dance recitals and performances in classical and folk music. Front rank exponents of these arts are extending their co-operation and the festival will consist of a programme of three hours in the evening on every one of the three days of the Conference.

EXHIBITION

Another feature will be a photographic exhibition of our heritage in art, forms in sculpture and stone, right from the day of Mahenjo Daro and Harappa. The Education Ministry of the Government of India has prepared this exhibition for international exposition and has kindly consented to release it for this Conference.

X. LANGUAGE COURTS:

India has fourteen principal languages and several dialects, in the literature of each of which great treasures of our culture lie hidden. These hidden treasures have been serving as a source of inspiration to millions of our countrymen and women. But due to distances and the diversity of languages, very little is known beyond the frontiers of a language of its greatness in the past and the progressive trends of the present. The language court is intended to give the visitor an idea of the contribution made by the regional languages and their literatures to an all-India culture. The languages

note see the another concerned to this, of the date 15th march 1951

represented are :

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|---|-------------|---------------|
| (1) Hindi | (2) Telugu | (3) Marathi |
| (4) Tamil | (5) Bengali | (6) Kannada |
| (7) Oriya | (8) Gujrati | (9) Punjabi |
| (10) Malyalam | (11) Urdu | (12) Assamese |
| and (13) Sanskrit. <i>and (14) <u>Kashmiri</u></i> | | |

In the end I would like to thank all the delegates who have taken pains to come from great distances to make this Conference a success. I may add that without the close co-operation of the public in general and the Delhi citizens in particular, this Conference may not have taken its present shape. We are also grateful to the Ministry of Education and the Governors and Rajpramukhs of our States, who have been good enough to extend all possible cooperation and help. In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that this Conference is just a beginning towards the realization of the objects which we have before us and I would appeal to all, therefore, to continue giving their unstinted support to us so that the Indian Cultural Academy may be established on very sound foundations and may serve the needs of our people and the Government.

SHANKARRAO DEO
Secretary,
 Indian Cultural Academy.

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